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Historical Amnesia
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, May 11, 2019, 11:23 PM

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Codes of War
by [Connor Antich](#) - Monday, May 13, 2019, 7:05 PM

I don't think it is honestly possible for "codes of war" to be written and followed by most nations. I think world organizations like the League of Nations and NATO though are the best chance of expressing authority on how to wage war. War in history has shown me that countries will do almost anything to achieve victory if it means saving there owns countrymens lives, preserving there nation's pride, and most importantly avoiding defeat. I can think and cite many examples from the past, many in World War 2 especially and many other recent examples. The prime two examples from World War 2 are Japan and Germany. Even though faced with certain defeat, the allies had to go to extreme measures to defeat these countries. Hitler would not surrender Germany when the Soviets reached Berlin and also the Americans and the British were not far behind in the west. Germany did not surrender until Hitler had committed suicide and until the Soviets were fighting in the streets of Berlin. Japan didn't consider surrender an option even when every single possession of their empire in the pacific was taken by the U.S. and facing 24/7 fire bombings from the U.S. It would take two atomic bombs and the Soviet entrance into the war to get Japan to surrender which took them a WEEK to decide after usage of the atomic bombs (Pg. 868 Textbook Map). What these two examples show is two nations who were desperate and willing to fight to the better end to avoid defeat at all costs to preserve there nationalist, imperialistic, militaristic and racial superiority pride and ideals. Also the U.S. dropped two atomic bombs on Japan to bring the war to a quicker end and to save american lives from an invasion of Japan. I believe this was a reason and justification to use the bombs but not the real reason. I think the Truman administration wanted to send a message to Stalin and the Soviets and wanted the U.S. to be in a position of power when negotiating post war Asia and post war Europe. Anyways, what these examples conclude for me is how can nations control how war is fought? In my opinion, nations can't control it. I think its almost impossible to obtain certain codes of war to me. There is unwritten codes of war in my opinion like the proper treatment of POWs, not killing civilians, the following of previous treaties made with nations, etc. To me mostly these aren't codes but rather signs of a nation that takes pride in how it handles and goes about war and shows humane respect. Ultimately

though you can't control another nation like the actions of imperial Japan and the execution of civilians and rape of women in Nanking. Countries wage war based on there past and there culture. War and human conflict has been around since humans have existed.

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Codes of War: Terribly Tough to Implement
by [Kaiser Slocum](#) - Thursday, May 16, 2019, 9:21 PM

Connor!

Your insight is very though-provoking. I believe you are right.

"Codes of War" are very commendable, but I feel like they are impossible to enforce considering that humans are very flawed and even our wisest ideas can go terribly bad. For instance, it is hard to make a blanket statement about what is "bad" and what is "good." During the American Revolution, Americans were outraged at England's treatment, while England was just trying to hold onto their colonies. Also, the Philippines hated the U.S.'s rule over them after the Spanish American war, while the U.S. just wanted a base closer in Asia and the resources in the Philippines. In my opinion (and taking into account this could be Historical Amnesia!), America did not want to brutally subdue the Philippines; they just wanted to use the Philippines, which is still pretty bad! In my opinion, "Codes of War" can only ever be somewhat successful as it is hard to make a formula or definite guidelines that countries can follow as every situation is going to be different. In order for these codes to work, almost every world country is going to have to agree to an insane amount of cooperation and checks and balances to enforce this.

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The U.S. and what is "good" and what is "bad"
by [Connor Antich](#) - Sunday, May 19, 2019, 10:06 PM

Kaiser, I couldn't agree with you more. Also I think its unfair for a nation or group of nations to deem and force what is "good" and what is "bad." I say this because almost every nation in there past is responsible for brutal acts, war crimes or imperial behavior. The U.S. and its alies can't enforce a "code of war" when they too are responsible for poor usage and discipline of a "good" or "right," "code of war" in there history and in todays wars in the Middle East if you ask me!!!!

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Japan Foreign Aggression, The League of Nations and Codes of War
by [Connor Antich](#) - Monday, May 13, 2019, 9:47 PM

Too further my discussion, I believe that organizations like NATO have best chance of "regulating codes of war." But I don't think it's a permanent solution. For example, The League of Nations failed as an organization to extract authority of this code in events leading up to World War 2. In 1931 when Japan invaded Manchuria and in 1937 when they invaded China and the Nanking massacre occurred in, the League of Nations took no major actions against Japan (Pg. 854,855 Textbook). The only relative action taken early by the league of nations was the Hoover-Stimson Doctrine which announced "non recognition" of Japan occupied Manchuria. Japan simply ignored this. Economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. including excluding exports and banning aviation fuel and scrape iron shipments to and freezing all assets to Japan was imposed until 1939, 1940 and 1941 (Pg 859 Textbook). These sanctions did not change Japan's mind of imperial action or change there way about how they think they should change war, if anything it furthered their belief that resources to fuel their empire would have to be acquired by military force throughout Asia and the Pacific, making them think a war with the U.S. was inevitable. They proved this belief by attacking the U.S. at Pearl Harbor in 1941 without warning. The example of Japanese foreign aggression committed without warning, killing of civilians and POWs and raping of women and the moves taken by the League of Nations shows that there was no way of imposing authority of "codes of war" on Japan. They simply ignored the League of Nations actions. Time showed that the only way of imposing this authority of Japan was defeating them in World War 2. The only way to truly impose the authority of "codes of war" to defeat them in war. Economic sanctions and not recognizing Japan did not make them rethink there code of war or policy but only make war seem inevitable.

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2

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Japan's Shame
by [McKay Luke](#) - Wednesday, May 15, 2019, 6:40 PM

The decided historical amnesia in regard to Japan’s apparent negligence in taking ownership of wartime crimes committed by soldiers in World War II is quite controversial. I can understand the Chinese sentiments of blatant opposition to Japan’s alleged omission of this history, seeing it as dehumanizing and irresponsible to not pay tribute to the wrongs done to their country, but I can also reason why Japan has had difficulty owning up to this shameful past. Amidst this, I believe the gravest concern regarding this matter is not the omission of the Rape of Nanking in textual sources, but the act of rewriting and reteaching of said acts. We see from the sources that perhaps the most famous example of this delusion is the Yasukuni Shrine, which is “dedicated to the spirits of soldiers who died in combat, including some convicted of war crimes” (War Museum Resists Japan Historical Amnesia, paragraph 6). A Tribute such is this is a mockery to China and the value of the lives lost in this conflict.

It is difficult to put it into words- because I don’t believe there is any real correct way to go about war- but I would say that given the circumstances, codes of war help to maintain some humanity in the certain dehumanizing act of belligerence. In the short video of Tamaki Matsuoka we hear that despite the known codes of war, many of the Japanese soldiers acted in aggressive war behavior. Consequently, in the graphic interviews, we hear from actual Japanese soldiers involved in the activities of Nanking that they knew they were acting poorly and doing terrible things. It is hard to conceptualize the idea of such a large group of people being so desensitized and accepting of such behavior, especially compared to the twenty-first century. I do believe in the importance of enforcing universal codes to go about hostile engagements, but I do not believe there is any real way to enforce such regulations, because as we see, many are quick to hide their shame and embarrassment and therefore I believe there are many things that happen that we have no record of.

I do not think that an in-depth analysis of the Rape of Nanking is necessary for our textbooks. The purpose of our textbook is to provide information regarding the United States and our involvement in national and international affairs since the birth of our country. A detailed investigation or wartime conflicts between two countries, while true and relevant to the era we are studying, can leave an unnecessary and biased opinion of external conflicts between foreign countries for the reader. I am not justifying or belittling the severity of this topic nor do I believe it’s unnecessary for United States citizens to be aware of, but I would argue that information we received was sufficient to understand Japan’s involvement and motives in World War II. I do not believe Japan is proud of this dark past, just as I believe the majority of Americans are not proud of the way Native Americans, African-Americans, and other minorities have been treated in our Country’s history. The importance here is taking ownership, learning from the past, and moving forward, which is much easier said than done.

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2

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Gravest concerns regarding “historical amnesia”
by [Hannah Harp](#) - Wednesday, May 15, 2019, 6:59 PM

In order to prevent history from repeating itself, we must be able to acknowledge and analyze previous events. This allows to see what worked well, and what didn’t work at all. It allows us to see what went wrong, and can help us to make sure it doesn’t happen again in the future. When we just ignore parts of history that have happened, or pretend like they never happened, I think that it has an extremely negative impact on everyone. It doesn’t allow us to heal, to grow, or to learn from the past. If we aren’t able to do these things, then what was the point in any of the blood shed, or the lives lost? Historical amnesia is extremely detrimental to this world as a whole. I think that in the case of the Rape of Nanking, obviously nobody wants something like this to make a repeat of itself, but my real concern is for the victims of this war. In the interview video of Matsuoka, she spoke to some victims from the war. One women explained the story of how she was raped, and too terrified to even fight back. To this day, she is still scared of seeing Japanese people. This is some serious trauma, and it divides us as humans. Most of the soldiers from back then would deny talking about the war, or even say it didn’t happen. Imagine encountering what the victims did, and then never getting any sort of closure or validation from the Japanese or people around the world for that matter. Nobody wants to acknowledge that this absolutely atrocious massacre was very much a real event, and cost the lives of 300,000 people according to the Rape of Nanking video. In the second article from moodle, it is even mentioned that one textbook refers to it as an “incident” rather than a massacre. I think that these survivors deserve atleast some form of peace from all that they endured, and that begins with recognition that such an absolute monstrosity took place.

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Memories of Horrific Clarity

by [Elizabeth Crandall](#) - Wednesday, May 15, 2019, 10:01 PM

"Forgotten Holocaust" is truly a fitting name for this devastation massacre of the Rape of Nanking because I, as well as probably millions of people, have never even heard of it before. My gravest concerns of certain attitudes of historical amnesia consists of the fact that it is practically prohibited in Japanese historical literature yet one of the Japanese soldiers interviewed so casually discussed how he raped many women before killing them (14 Rape of Nanking 2007 video, 10:15). He even mentions that the soldiers were told to NOT rape the women but they did so anyway (11:55). Another concern is that, according to "War Museum Resists Japan's Historical Amnesia" by David McNeill, "Ultrationalists have threatened to burn down the [Chukiren Peace] museum, prompting the elderly staff members to look into the unfamiliar world of high-tech security." People are in such denial and retaliation against the truth because it seems like they just cannot fathom or even handle the truth.

"Codes of war" should be agreed upon by a democracy, not an imperialistic dictatorship. They should be enforced with honor, dignity and passionate liberty. Never should anything be wrought out via violent action, war-hungry criminals, nor any negative motivation such as hatred, discrimination, and greed.

As for our current textbook *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People*, it is rather disturbing that there is an incredible lack of information about the Rape of Nanking. My first thought weaved its way through the USA's list of world allies. Japan is included in that list. Could that mean that we are giving a silent nod of "don't ask, don't tell" in their political direction? Is our country's historical literature regarding this gruesome tragedy left out intentionally? While signs tend to point me in the direction of uncertainty, it is definitely suspicious. It seems that Japan is not the only country displaying historical amnesia toward the poor souls who suffered in the Manchuria invasion.

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3

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Re: Memories of Horrific Clarity

by [Trey Husko](#) - Sunday, May 19, 2019, 9:03 PM

Elizabeth,

You raise an interesting point that I hadn't really thought of when I initially went through this forum material. I originally thought the book mainly chose to exclude Nanking because it's lack of significance to the United State's overall involvement in the war. However, I had not really ever thought about the idea that maybe because the US and Japan are on better terms the writers were more likely to leave the details to a minimal amount.

I still don't think that's probably the main reason it was very briefly mentioned. In another example from WWII was the terrible events that occurred on the eastern front of the war. The textbook failed to mention the horrifying rape of women that occurred in areas like Poland, Eastern Germany (by Soviet Troops), and Western Soviet Union (by German troops). This has led to some historical amnesia done by Russia to go as far as banning textbooks from covering the rapes committed by Soviet troops and leaving "*decades of silence*" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rape_during_the_occupation_of_Germany).

The writers of the textbook as a whole seem to have excluded some of the more "darker" sides of the war that involved the horrible treatment of civilians. I don't completely agree with excluding all the details of events like Nanking, but I can understand why an American history textbook might choose to leave it out.

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"Dark" moments of WW2 not mentioned in Textbook

by [Connor Antich](#) - Sunday, May 19, 2019, 10:17 PM

Trey, I agree with you on the fact that it does seem like our textbook has indeed left out the "darker" parts of history in Germany, Poland, Eastern Europe, Nanking, China and the Pacific. I agree that our textbook should mention the horrors committed by the Germans, Soviets and Japanese during there occupations. Because these horrors are facts and part of history. It makes me ask questions and feel suspicious that are textbook doesn't talk about and mention Nanking and other horrors that occured during WW2. It should also mention more about war crimes committed by the U.S. and Britain in WW2 because they are responsible for some crimes, obviously not equally responsible or comparable to German, Japanese and Soviet crimes though.

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Historical Amnesia Affects

by [Kaiser Slocum](#) - Wednesday, May 15, 2019, 11:25 PM

Whether or not people want to admit it, every major country has participated in “Historical Amnesia.” However, there are many reasons for this. Some of the reasons include the following: it was simply a minor event, it was an embarrassing blemish in a country’s history, or it was not well documented and most people have forgotten about it. As a general guideline, I feel like “Historical Amnesia” is very dangerous to a country and yet extremely easy to fall into. Looking just at an individual person, if we cannot remember screwing up in some way than we will very likely do it again; that is why parents, grandparents, and friends tell us so many things and give so many lessons in hope that we will not repeat the same mistakes they made. Taking this to a larger scale, any country is more than capable of repeating an atrocity if they glaze over it or just forget about it. The world cannot afford to repeat such events as the Holocaust and Rape of Nanking, so we must remember and search for ways to avoid these events.

At least in America, text books are not assigned to or monitored by the U.S. Government. So what any author writes in his textbook should not necessarily be a reflection on the country as a whole. Some textbooks, like our one, do not go into a lot of detail about atrocities mainly become it is focusing on the U.S. and a grand overview of events. It does not have time to concentrate on all of the events happening in other countries and focusing on events like the Titanic, which although it was bad, most people know about anyway.

With this being said though, one can look at the majority of history books in any country and normally find a trend in the style and info included. The trend of downplaying cruel events in a country’s past is very popular in countries as, of course, countries do not want to admit to the terrible things they did. China’s anger towards Japan for downplaying the massive massacre known as the “Rape of Nanking” is understandable, just as many people (including me) or upset at those who say the Holocaust never happened. Many countries want their people to have a wonderful love and patriotism for their country and if all of the citizens know about the bad stuff the country has committed, they may lose that and become divided. However, as I discussed above, a country cannot truly become great until they own up to their mistakes and make provisions to avoid any future occurrences. Although China has a reason to be upset, they also must take a look at what they have done and realize that they are not far from guilt as well.

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How to define the code of war

by [Hannah Harp](#) - Thursday, May 16, 2019, 10:49 PM

The code of war is a tricky one. We know this because different countries go about war in different ways. They have different rules to follow, different priorities, and even different morals. We saw with the Hague Conventions that they tried to define the laws of war, and failed to have a solid agreement. In my opinion, it seemed like the Geneva Conventions were a bit more successful. I think this has to do with the fact that it was more so about the people in the war. I think that every country can agree that when it has to do with people, they’d like to have as little casualties as possible. That’s something I think most could come to an agreement on with little argument. When it comes to laws of warfare, the use of weapons, and actual battle this is where there seems to be some grey area. We saw that with the Rape of Nanking, the Japanese took advantage of China while they were in a time of weakness, and not only did they want to overtake the land, they got greedy and decided they’d like to terrorize the people as well and went on a killing spree. The Rape of Nanking video even talks about the killing contests that were held, and people being stuffed into vehicles that were pushed off into the river. When writing a code of war, you’d think it wouldn’t be humane to do these kinds of things, yet they still happened. As far as authority goes, I think that each country is going to play by their own rules, and follow whatever voice is in authority with little regard to rules. This is how war is enforced. You listen to whoever is in command because at the end of the day if you don’t, it could cause you backlash, or even your life.

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Why the Rape of Nanking was missing.

by [Hannah Harp](#) - Friday, May 17, 2019, 1:05 PM

There is absolutely no reason why this level of detail should have been missing from US textbooks. It's one thing to be missing from Japanese textbooks, and although still wrong, I don't see any reason for the rest of the world to be uninformed on it. Even if the Japanese were willing to hide it from their people. This is history, no matter how anyone wants to frame it, it still occurred, and it is still something that everyone can learn from. In our text it briefly mentions, "In summer 1937, after an exchange of gunfire between Japanese and Chinese troops at the Marco Polo Bridge near Beijing, Japanese armies captured Shanghai, Nanjing, Shandong, and Beijing. Japan demanded that China become subservient to Tokyo" (855). This very short sentence was supposed to tell us of the mini Holocaust that was the Rape of Nanking? The 300,000 lives it claimed, or the 80,000 victims ranging from very young children to old women that were raped (Rape of Nanking video)? I just find it absolutely mind boggling that the entire world could be left in the dark about this. This was a significant part of history that I whole heartedly feel should be included in every textbook around the world, and my heart hurts for all of the people effected by this that never got justice. How else can people learn from these mistakes, how else can victims get any sort of closure, how are we supposed to stop this from happening in the future?

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Re: Why the Rape of Nanking was missing.
by [McKay Luke](#) - Friday, May 17, 2019, 6:38 PM

While I do not necessarily agree with you on every point you made, you bring up interesting and thought-provoking insights. I absolutely agree with learning from past mistakes and the need to pass along correct information to adhere to change. However, as you stated "it's one thing to be missing from Japanese textbooks, and although still wrong, I don't see any reason for the rest of the world to be uninformed on it" I would argue the opposite. I agree it's atrocious what happened in Nanking and it was absolutely eye-opening for me as I had never read about this before, but I believe Japan's lack of inclusion in their history is far more disheartening than the omission in textbooks of other nations. Our history book is a compilation of United States relations both nationally and internationally and while there is some deviance in its curriculum, I'm not surprised by the lack of inclusive information on what really happened in Nanking. Again, I am not belittling the massacre but I feel I understand why it's often looked over.

So much of what we read in textbooks or see in documentaries is grossly impersonal. In week 7's videos, the video "The Atomic Bomb" shares the astronomical numbers resulting in the demolition of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Between the two cities, over 200,000 people were killed by just two bombs dropped by just two planes. In the video, Ray Leopold goes on to argue that "By killing some quarter-million Japanese, we may have saved half a million American lives" (The Atom Bomb 4:52). My point here is that many historical statistics rely on estimation- rounding off numbers of lives erased. Think of the millions of lives lost in World War II and how they are all just lumped into a large estimated sum. The fact of the matter is that while there are so many important events to learn from and remember, time tends to dilute evidence, whether, for brevity's sake or intentional historical amnesia, and It is impossible to get the exact factual truth of everything that has happened in history.

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Nanjing Tragedy
by [Kathy Holmes](#) - Friday, May 17, 2019, 4:15 PM

My biggest concern regarding "historical amnesia" in the case of Nanjing is the lack of publication in schools. As Americans, we are so quick to jump on the pride bandwagon for our country but have a hard time looking at our faults. As the publications were removed from school textbooks in Japan about the Nanjing tragedy, children do not have the opportunity or ability to learn of an event that their ancestors may have partaken in. In this case, seeing how much of the detail regarding this incident was left out of our textbook I think this was done frankly because it is a textbook about American history. I don't disagree with leaving this tragedy out of the textbook as I feel that the text is not lacking without this information but I don't think including a page about the historical significance and events would have hurt anything. This was an event I had not heard of before and it would have been nice to see some more information about it in the textbook but I understand why it was not included.

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Why the U.S. and Britain have no right to enforce "codes of war"



by [Connor Antich](#) - Friday, May 17, 2019, 6:16 PM

“Codes of War” in my opinion can’t and shouldn’t be forced by any particular nation or nations. I know in my previous post I said that organizations like NATO and the UN are the best hope we have of enforcing “codes of war”, but after some reflection and realizations of the countries past history in those groups, I’ve learned that no nation or nations truly have the right to tell other nations how war should be waged or preach that they wage war the right way. Countries in NATO and the UN have waged war in past wars with alarming methods if you ask me and because of this shouldn’t give them the right to enforce other countries on what is wrong and right about how to wage war. For example, the U.S. in World War 2 firebombed entire civilian cities in Japan and Germany and inflicting tremendous civilian losses. March 9-10 in 1945 saw 100,000 Japanese lose their lives due to American air attacks on Tokyo (Textbook Page 866). Also U.S. soldiers in the Pacific a lot of the time rather kill the enemy rather than take prisoners (Textbook Page 865). Also, we can’t forget that our nation is the only nation that has actually used weapons of mass destruction in war. We dropped two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 6th and 9th, 1945. These cities had no military value. We killed thousands in seconds and hundreds of thousands in months. The U.S. today is also responsible for many civilian deaths due to airstrikes and drone strikes in the Middle East against terrorist groups. These are just a few examples when there are many more. These examples of targeting civilians and poor treatment of POWs gives the U.S. no right to force a code of war on any nation!

Also, let’s take a quick look at Britain. Britain as well has no right to enforce any code of war upon nations. The British Empire ruled over many foreign peoples from 1583-1945 roughly. During this time the British enforced their will upon people in the Pacific, Asia, India, Caribbean, America and Africa. They took colonies and lands with military force and had no respect for these peoples as they believed they were inferior to them. The British were ruthless in military conflict and had no care for foreign people’s lives in war. They also were a nation that supported and participated in the Atlantic Slave Trade. In which millions of slaves were shipped from Africa to their colonies. Also in colonies the British ruled, the local civilian population had terrible living conditions and food supply. As the colonies’ resources, food and wealth were sent to Britain. The British have no right to enforce anything on nations either!

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Intentional Exclusion of Details on Nanking?
by [Trey Husko](#) - Saturday, May 18, 2019, 9:37 PM

Prior to this class I had a decent knowledge of WWII and the events that led up to it. Japan's war against China following the Marco Polo bridge incident was definitely a major feud between the two countries so I was quite *shocked* at the videos and articles about Nanking provided for this week's forum. It came as a surprise after reading last week's chapter that all that was mentioned was "Japan's brutal occupation of Nanjing—where perhaps 300,000 Chinese civilians were killed—alarmed Roosevelt" (pg 855 textbook).

So that brings the question; why was this all the details that was mentioned in the textbook? To me I believe it was probably for a couple main reasons. The incident in Nanjing didn't really play a major part in the US decision to join the war. It wasn't until Pearl Harbor when Roosevelt decided it was time for the United States to enter the war. The other reason that ties into this is that it is an American textbook that covers US History. While the Nanjing incident deserves to be mentioned and taught, the textbook writers chose to mainly focus on what the US did and how we were as a country involved in the war. There's only so much you can realistically condense down into a textbook without getting extremely lengthy. One could write a textbook that solely focuses on US involvement during WWII, let alone a WWII textbook. I don't believe you can fault the textbook writers as censoring history or such for leaving the Nanjing incident details this minimal.

Should history like the Nanking occupation be forgotten? No, and I do think it could have had a little more detail provided about it. Nanjing was a darker piece of history as exemplified by the interviews with former Japanese soldiers (Rape of Nanking video). In the last interview the man continues to talk about the events that unfolded before being told to quit asking him questions and that what he was saying wasn't true by presumably a family relative (toward end of video). It shows there are some people that don't want to keep mentioning their country's darker pasts—in some cases even denying something with evidence occurred— but history needs to be taught so we can't forget these tragedies and avoid them again. The book leaving out Nanking details is justifiable, but not for the reasoning that it's too severe and needs to be censored.

6/12/2019

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